

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY
INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 166812

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SCUL, CSCE

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH SOVIET CORRESPONDENTS AT DEPARTMENT

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1. SUMMARY: DEPARTMENT CALLED IN SOME WASHINGTON SOVIET CORRESPONDENTS JUNE 30 AND REVIEWED WITH THEM THE VARIOUS CREDENTIALS AND WORKING FACILITIES PROVIDED BY THE DEPARTMENT. DEPARTMENT DID NOT VOLUNTEER THAT THE UNUSUAL MEETING WAS RELATED TO THE WHITNEY-PIPER LIBEL CASE IN MOSCOW, AND THE SOVIETS DID NOT ASK. END SUMMARY

2. EVENING JUNE 29 DEPARTMENT PRESS OFFICE PHONED WASHINGTON COMMUNITY OF SOVIET CORRESPONDENTS AND ASKED THEM TO ATTEND 10 A.M. MEETING JUNE 30. PRESS COUNSELOR KAMENEV SUBSEQUENTLY PHONED PRESS OFFICE TO INQUIRE ABOUT NATURE OF MEETING, AND WAS TOLD IT WAS TO DISCUSS WORKING CONDITIONS AND ACCREDITATION.

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3. THREE SOVIET CORRESPONDENTS SHOWED UP FOR JUNE 30 MEETING -- VITALIY GAN AND BORIS IVANOV OF TASS, AND MELOR STURUA OF IZVESTIYA. NO SOVIET EMBASSY OFFICER ACCOMPANIED THEM. DEPARTMENT WAS REPRESENTED BY TWO WORKING-LEVEL OFFICERS, FROM PRESS OFFICE AND EUR;SOV.

4. DEPTOFF OPENED CONVERSATION BY NOTING THAT WITHIN THE US

GOVERNMENT THERE WAS "A BURST OF INTEREST" IN SOVIET CORRESPONDENTS, AND DEPTOFFS WANTED TO DISCUSS WITH THE CORRESPONDENTS THEIR PRESENT ARRANGEMENTS IN WASHINGTON TO ASSURE THAT BOTH SIDES SHARED THE SAME VIEW OF WHAT THE DEPARTMENT DOES AND DOES NOT DO FOR THEM.

5. DEPTOFF NOTED THAT STATE DEPARTMENT FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT'S IDENTIFICATION CARD AFFORDS FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS 24-HOUR-A-DAY ACCESS TO STATE DEPARTMENT BUILDING. DEPTOFF NOTED THAT CORRESPONDENTS' CARDS ARE EXPIRING, AND THEY MUST APPLY FOR RENEWAL. THEY INDICATED THEY WOULD DO SO.

6. LISTING OTHER SERVICES AND FACILITIES, DEPTOFFS CITED USE OF SHARED BOOTH IN CORRESPONDENTS' PRESS ROOM, DAILY ACCESS TO NOON PRESS BRIEFINGS, ACCESSIBILITY OF PRESS OFFICE AND OTHER OFFICES TO ANSWER QUESTIONS DURING ENTIRE DAY, WEEKENDS, AND EVENINGS, AVAILABILITY OF PRESS RELEASES, STATEMENTS AND TICKER MACHINES, AND USE OF ICA-SPONSORED FOREIGN PRESS CENTER IN NATIONAL PRESS BUILDING.

7. IF MEETING WITH CORRESPONDENTS BECOMES PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE, WE PLAN TO CONFIRM THAT IT TOOK PLACE BUT TO AVOID COMMENT ON PURPOSE OR OTHER DETAILS. VANCE

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